

## **Sea Level Rise Adaptation Planning Issue Identification Workshop**

### **Welcoming Remarks by Dave Carter**

**March 12, 2009**

Good Morning, Thank you for coming out to help get us started on our efforts to evaluate and plan for Sea Level Rise in Delaware.

While Climate Change is a complex global issue, responding to the effects of sea level rise is a local issue. Local communities are where adaptation actions and response will take place.

In our coastal zone, populations are concentrated and natural resource-based economies are especially vulnerable.

This may get worse as we experience accelerated sea level rise and increased storm frequencies or intensities.

We face increased vulnerability to flooding, storm damage, shoreline erosion, habitat losses, salt water intrusion into groundwater, and damage to expensive public infrastructure vital to the health and safety of our communities.

If not prepared, addressing these issues may overwhelm state and local budgets.

The cost of inaction will likely be far higher than the cost of thoughtful actions methodically taken over time.

To prepare,

- We need an improved scientific foundation for our decision making.
- We need better tools and technical assistance at the state and local level.
- We need to determine how to better deliver these tools and capabilities to better serve our communities and society.
- We need a rational plan of action.

### **Most of all, We Need to Work Together**

As if this climate change issue wasn't enough, there is another challenge most of us are facing —shrinking budgets.

Most of us know that working together is the right thing to do. And if there is anyone here who hasn't bought into that theory, I believe you'll come to that realization very soon. We have to work together. We have to work smarter.

The cornerstone of any partnership opportunity is the ability to connect. We have to know each other and come together and talk before we can reach a consensus not only about the issues, but how to address them.

And then, we have to work together leveraging resources if we are going to turn these ideas into solutions.

So we need to find ways to connect, to share, and speak with a collective voice.

I hope that we will start down this road today, and look forward to the ideas, input, and guidance that each of you can provide.

We at the Delaware Coastal Programs are taking this issue seriously. Fortunately, this is timely for us. NOAA's Office of Coastal Resource Management, who provides our funding, is also making adaptation planning a high priority for the use of the funding they provide to Coastal Programs.

In response, we are redirecting our efforts and program staff to provide significant resources of our federal funding in staffing, project funds, and pass-through-grants to local governments to deal with this issue in each of the next few years.

It will be the priority issue of our program, and one we hope will serve as a catalyst to many other efforts to address the issues we identify.

Your ideas and input today and in the future will help keep us grounded in what is important, and will guide us on how we best use these resources to serve Delaware.

## **Acknowledgements**

As for working together --- Some new partnerships have already developed leading up to this workshop.

While I don't have time to talk about them in detail, I will point out just a few as part of my acknowledgement and thanks for those that have helped us get to this point.

- UD EPSCOR & Center for Critical Zone Research – Cosponsor of this project and funding partner for Coastal Flood Monitoring System. They helped organize this workshop and continue to look for opportunities to help build our science base for decision making.
- NOAA – OCRM & CSC - Base Funding, CSC Fellow, Partnership Pilot Project w/USGS to work on LiDAR and some other key products, Digital Coast Project, New Climate Services.

- Bowers Beach and the City of New Castle – Pilot project
- Prime Hook Refuge – Pilot project on Wetlands Vulnerability and Protection
- DNREC Shoreline and Waterway Program
- USGS & EPA (Presenters and many staff that have provided technical guidance in recent months)
- Coastal States Organization
- DCP Staff

## **Speakers**

Today, we will start off with speakers working at the global, national, regional, and local level on issues related to sea level rise. These will help us set the stage for the work ahead.

- Our first speaker is Jeff Williams...
- Followed by Jim Titus...
- Followed by Kristen Fletcher...
- Followed by Susan Love & Steve Borleske